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## Green building to take root

Privately held structure in Saanich to meet LEED standards

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Saanich is getting its first privately owned "green" building, at a high-profile site just off the Pat Bay Highway.

Cory Lee, one of the developers of the three-storey commercial building, said yesterday that they are aiming for a silver rating in the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design system (LEED).

"It will be the first privately funded LEED-certified building in Saanich," he said.

Publicly funded buildings at the University of Victoria and the Vancouver Island Technology Park are LEED-certified, but so far, there are no privately financed buildings in the municipality.

The project on the old B.C. Hydro site at 4396 West Saanich Rd. received unanimous approval from Saanich council earlier this week.

The 2,774-square-metre building will be used for commercial and retail, likely a restaurant or coffee shop on the ground floor, with office space above.

The family company Tri-Eagle Development hopes to start building by mid-2008, with completion a year later. Construction costs are targeted at about \$5.5 million, about 20 per cent more than they would be if built to the usual standard rather than one that is LEED certified, Lee said.

LEED has four levels of certification -- bronze, silver, gold and platinum. Buildings are awarded ratings by a point system that takes into consideration everything from proximity to public transportation and bike trails, to water efficiency inside, what kind of construction materials are used, to the quality of the indoor environment. Builders aim for a certain certification, but don't know if they've attained it until after the building is complete and an independent review is done.

The building will have things such as a green roof, with a cover of perennial plants and hearty succulents. That helps with water retention, reduced heat gain and transpiration of moisture. The modern design incorporates large windows to allow more natural light. A bike room with showers will be on site so employees can take advantage of nearby bike trails to get to and from work.

Although it's more expensive initially to build to LEED standards, Lee said it

should pay off in the long run in terms of slightly higher rents for businesses who value the environmental aspects of the site. Heat and lighting costs will be less expensive for tenants because of better natural lighting and less heat loss. Three-storey buildings are usually wood-frame, but Tri-Eagle is using more expensive concrete for longevity, Lee said.

"Business is definitely changing. We're all trying to build more sustainable buildings," Lee said. "This is a move in the right direction."

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